

Remember, protect your skin each
and every time you hit the surf.

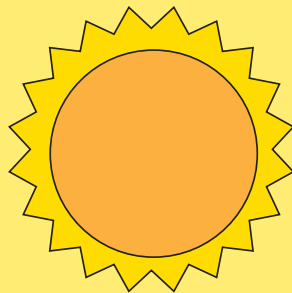
To learn more about sun safety, contact the **Skin Cancer
Prevention Program (SCPP)** at (916) 449-5393 or by
E-mail at amanthe@dhs.ca.gov.

You are also invited to visit SCPP's website at
www.dhs.ca.gov/cpns/skin/index.htm. Note especially the
"Resources" section.



Photo © Nikki Brooks

Apply sunscreen to all exposed skin.



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California Department of Health Services, Skin Cancer Prevention Program.

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Surfers



**Block Those
Harmful UV Rays!**

Photo © Paul Doran and Chris Rempe

Like all athletes, surfers take special precautions to ensure their safety. They routinely check the surf, noting currents, channels, tides, and set sizes. But many board riders tend to overlook a significant hazard to their health – ultraviolet (UV) rays.

Surfers are constantly exposed to UV rays, one of the most prevalent environmental carcinogens. Long sessions and poor protective measures, coupled with the fact that water magnifies detrimental UV rays an additional 25%, make surfers highly prone to extensive skin damage and possible death. Whether pulling into a gaping pit, busting a phat air, or popping your tail loose, you are at risk.

Before paddling out, consider the following facts about the sun and its link to skin cancer:

- **Skin cancer is EPIDEMIC.** One in five people will eventually contract the disease. Skin cancer can grow and spread throughout the body leading to potential disfigurement and DEATH.
- **Sunlight causes 90% of skin cancer.** Unprotected exposure to UV rays also produces blistering sunburns, premature aging (wrinkles and blotches), a weakened immune system, and cataracts.
- **UV rays are a major human carcinogen.** They are in the same class as other cancer-causing elements like arsenic, asbestos, radon, and tobacco smoke. UV rays are more intense (destructive) from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. and from mid-spring through mid-autumn. Try to limit your sun exposure during these times.



Photo © Nikki Brooks

UV rays damage unprotected skin.

- The number of new skin cancer cases in California (127,000) exceeds the sum of the next 12 types of cancer (101,505), which includes cancers of the breast, prostate, lung, and colon. In California, 1,300 people die annually from skin cancer.
- UV rays easily penetrate clouds, so observe ALL sun-safety practices on cloudy days.



Cover and protect your skin.

Photo © Nikki Brooks

The most encouraging aspect of skin cancer is that it is highly PREVENTABLE! The secret to avoiding damage from UV rays is to place a barrier between yourself and the sun.

If you don't surf in a wetsuit, wear a rash guard and some long surf trunks. Wear a hat to protect your head. Additional clothing such as gloves, booties, squid lids, and sunglasses don't wash off and provide great protection for those long sessions.

Apply waterproof sunscreen (SPF 30 or greater) to ALL skin that remains exposed. For best results, use a sunscreen containing **zinc oxide** or **z-cote** 15 minutes before entering the water and reapply it every 30-60 minutes thereafter. Don't forget to apply sunscreen to often neglected, uncovered parts of the body including bald spots, the forehead, tips of the ears, backs of the hands, the neck, and the lower legs and feet.